

He said that Witney was getting bigger and therefore the club was getting more enquiries. Burwell Recreation Ground had been established as the home for the club with help from the Town Council. The club was actively fundraising to try to keep the club going.

Mr Chesterman explained that the reason for addressing the council that evening was effectively a begging bowl. Every year the club used the all-weather pitch at Wood Green School. Lots of other clubs also used this facility and this meant that the club had to rotate every second week and so they could not train every week. They had struggled to find other proper training facilities in Witney. It was a lack of sporting facilities that had brought him to the meeting. The club were booked for the all-weather pitch at Wood Green until April 2014 but after that things appeared uncertain. The club's aspiration was for an all-weather pitch at Burwell Meadow. The club had 30 enquiries per week from prospective players and as yet had no girls' team. They wanted to develop Burwell Recreation Ground as a sporting facility, and to provide the club with security for the future.

A member asked Mr Chesterman how much the pitch would cost and if the club would fundraise towards this? She wanted to know if they had applied to sporting bodies for funding. Mr Chesterman replied that they were trying to find sources of funding. Another member asked if the club was asking the Town Council for a contribution, to which Mr Chesterman replied in the affirmative.

A member asked if the club wanted the area as a dedicated spot for the Witney Vikings, because this would not be able to happen. Mr Chesterman replied that they would welcome all sports/clubs to use the area. The same member asked if the club had spoken to WODC Leisure Department and the club confirmed that they had done so. A member proposed that the club could apply for grants and then return to the Town Council.

The Town Clerk explained that the Town Council was holding a review of the sports facilities in the town and asked if the club had spoken to the consultants Sports Solutions GB Ltd. The Facilities Manager said she had done so on the club's behalf. The Town Council wanted to ensure that there was long term provision for sport in the town.

A member asked if the club would have enough changing rooms and other facilities. Mr Chesterman confirmed that they had all other facilities thanks to the Facilities Manager and the Town Council. This left the club looking at an outside sports area for all to use. A member commented that this would be in line with the Town Council's policy.

Mr Smith – Tower Hill Cemetery

Mr Smith addressed the Committee, stating that he was disappointed that the cemetery gate was closed. His wife was not fit and her health and mobility were declining. Mr Smith had written to the Facilities Manager who had explained that she was looking into the matter. Mr Smith told the Committee that both his son and his mother were buried in the cemetery and since the closure his wife had been unable to visit them. He supported Ms Jones' viewpoint.

L 306 TOWER HILL CEMETERY ACCESS

The Chairman referred to the Facilities Manager's report which had been deferred to this Committee from the meeting of full Council held on 24th June 2013. She had reported on the card access system as had been requested by members. Councillors had had the opportunity earlier that evening to tour the cemetery with the Officers to understand the solution being proposed.

A member stated that he thought there were several ways of safeguarding both the access to the cemetery and the graves, and a one way system was a good idea. He was opposed to the idea of having gates locked at all and said that it was not for the Town Council to decide when people could visit the cemetery. He said that the cemetery should be open to all.

Another member commented that the cemetery was not closed. The Council had had to rethink the access due to the ignorance of a few people who had driven over graves and were disrespectful when funerals were taking place. She commended the Facilities Manger on her search for solutions. The cemetery had been opened in the 19th century and had not been designed for cars. She stated that it was not the fault of the Council that it had to close the cemetery; it was trying to protect the cemetery. She felt that the blame should be directed at the few people that had abused the cemetery access. The Town Council had been trying very hard to resolve the issue.

The Chairman said that the cemetery access was an emotive subject and appealed to the Committee to consider the issue in a calm manner.

A member stated that her parents were buried in the cemetery but she had never experienced any problems and had in fact not realised that there were unmarked graves alongside the driveway. She thought that past Council's should have erected a sign to indicate these. She thought that even with a one way system there could still be problems. Her personal preference was to keep the gates open with free access. She did not think that electronic gates were the solution.

Another member commented that it had been his idea to have electronic gates with a key card system. He reminded members that only a few weeks ago a headstone had been damaged when a car drove over two graves. The driver had subsequently contacted the Facilities Manager to try to make a claim for damage to the car on the Town Council's insurance. There had also been an incident a few weeks previously when a funeral had been in progress and six cars were parked on unmarked children's graves. He stated that the site must be protected and that he was firmly in favour of controlled key card access with electric gates. He knew that this system operated in Grantham.

The Vice Chairman said that he had visited the cemetery along with other councillors that evening and had been very impressed by the appearance of the cemetery. It looked extremely tidy and he thought the Town Council were doing a good job. He thought that there was no perfect solution to the access issue and that compromise was necessary. He thought the gate should be open at all times and a one way system introduced. He also favoured the introduction of bollards with linked chains along the sides of the driveway. Parking should be permitted in the middle of the cemetery and all other roads should be blocked off to vehicles. He thought that the gates should remain open during daylight hours and close at dusk so no one could access the cemetery by car at night. He also wanted the gates to be locked during funerals. The Town Council's staff would need to manage this.

Another member had also visited the cemetery that evening and agreed that it looked very well kept. He broadly welcomed the Facilities Manager's proposals but had some reservations. He was concerned about cars meeting at the entrance by sections M and N and having to reverse out onto the road, and he was also concerned with the area between sections O, P and Y, where the bottoms of the unmarked baby graves were touching the asphalt. There was no possibility of widening the road and he was concerned that it was not wide enough for a car to drive around.

A member reiterated her earlier statement that the cemetery had not been designed for cars. She had concerns about vandalism if electric gates were installed. She supported the idea of a central parking area as it would not be too difficult to walk to any grave from that point.

The Facilities Manager referred to her report of May 2013 and commented that there were good reasons for having gates that were lockable at the cemetery. There was often heavy plant being operated – for example grass cutting machines and machinery for grave digging. Shutting the gates ensured the safety of the public and also Town Council staff and external contractors. She had also received letters from people who had felt unsafe walking around the cemetery when cars were

driving around. There would be a cost implication for monitoring the gates – staff would have to wait whilst a funeral was taking place in order to open the gates again.

Another member stated that it was only a small number of people that were causing a problem and that the Council should seek to correct their behaviour rather than limiting the access of the majority who were respectful. He agreed with another member's earlier comment that the unmarked graves should be marked.

The Vice Chairman proposed that the Committee should accept the Facilities Manager's suggestion of as one way system in the cemetery, with bollards and with the gates kept open during daylight hours. The system should be aesthetically pleasing.

Another member commented that she would still like to see electronically controlled access. She said that there was 24 hour access for pedestrians. A member suggested an amendment to the Vice Chairman's proposal: to see how the system worked for three months and then review it.

PROPOSED:

To accept the Vice Chairman's proposal with the suggested amendment:

- i) To keep the cemetery gates unlocked during Town Council work operatives working hours (9am to 4:30pm – Monday to Friday)
- ii) To implement a one way system and car park with bollards as per the Facilities Manager's report
- iii) To review the new system after a period of three months.

The Chairman asked for members to vote on this proposal.

RECOMMENDATION: Members unanimously agreed to the proposal.

The Chairman said that this had been an emotive subject and that he hoped that this would allow the situation to move on and to allow people to grieve as they wanted to. He hoped for a positive review in three months.

The Chairman wanted to thank the Facilities Manager for her work and offered her his profound thanks. He also commended the work of the Town Council.

L 307 **OPERATIONAL REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Facilities Manager as circulated with the agenda.

- i) Windrush Cemetery Project - The Facilities Manager reported that the new ashes garden had had a positive effect. The implementation of the project had been a response to public feedback. The changes made had been well received and the feedback was now very positive. A member commented that both cemeteries looked well kept.
- ii) Friends of the Cemetery Groups - The Facilities Manager had been in contact with other cemeteries and the idea of Witney having a "Friends of the Cemetery" group had arisen. She said that this was a chance for the public to play a proactive role. A member asked how this would be set up, and the Facilities Manager replied that volunteers would be asked for and the Town Council could offer them a room to meet, and perhaps provide an opportunity to meet with officers to discuss any issues.

Another member suggested contacting the people who had been involved in the Tower Hill access project as it would offer them a chance to contribute their views.

The Vice Chairman asked if the police had been contacted about the anti-social behaviour in the cemetery and the Facilities Manager confirmed that they had been and in fact the police had confirmed this at the last meeting of the Full Council on 24th June 2013.

- iii) Cemetery Access to Windrush - The Facilities Manager had received an update from the County Council Highways Department. Work was planned to put in additional signage, tidy up the verges and to put in an extra lane for turning into the cemetery. She did not have an exact date but she assumed that it would be during the current financial year.
- iv) War Memorial Grant Update - Unfortunately the Town Council had been unsuccessful in applying for a grant towards the repair of the war memorial, as the majority of the work was classed as maintenance and was therefore ineligible.

The Events and Communications Officer commented that she had met with the Chairman of the Royal British Legion and he had expressed his thanks to the Town Council for the work done.

- v) Mrs Saunders' Fence - This item had been referred to the Leisure and Recreation Committee at the meeting of the Full Council on 24th June 2013. A member asked if Mrs Saunders agreed to the proposal for the Town Council to meet the costs of supplying a 3ft fence and making the additional contribution herself for the further 3ft height. The Facilities Manager confirmed that had agreed and that Mrs Saunders would take responsibility for any future maintenance.
- vi) Letter from Mrs Warren regarding son's memorial - The land in question – Church Green - belonged to West Oxfordshire District Council and therefore Mrs Warren should be referred to the District Council.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. that the Facilities Manager's report be noted
2. that a "Friends of the Cemetery" volunteer group be created
3. that the scope of work for Mrs Saunders' fence be agreed as detailed above
4. that Mrs Warren is referred to West Oxfordshire District Council.

L 308 **SPORTS AND RECREATION**

The Committee received and considered the Facilities Manager report as circulated with the agenda.

- i) New Pitch Requirements - In response to a members question the Facilities Manager confirmed that the £200 per week was to over mark every pitch in the Town and that it was very good value. The £200 over marking would only be during the football season. The cost would be offset to some degree by the additional pitches for hire, but until bookings had been finalised it was not possible to calculate what this would be.

- ii) Burwell Play Day - The Play Day had been organised for 30th August and would also mark the celebrations for the dedication of the Burwell recreation ground as a Jubilee QEII field in trust. Money had been raised towards this and a full programme of events would be available at the next meeting of the Committee. A commemorative plaque had been received and the oak tree sapling had been ordered. A site needed to be chosen for the planting.
- iii) Burwell Recreation Ground Improvements - The Facilities Manager reminded members that the safety surface at the Burwell Recreation ground was listed as high risk by the ROSPA inspection. She and the Works/Contracts Supervisor suggested removing the existing surface and replacing it rather than repairing it. Grant applications had been submitted to help with the cost.

A member asked why the report did not mention the tennis courts at West Witney Sports Ground, and the Town Clerk reminded Members that that the whole ground was subject to the recreation review. The report was due for delivery at the end of July.

Another member who was the Council's representative of the West Witney Sports & Social Club had attended a Ground User Group meeting and asked if the group could make a presentation to the next committee meeting. After some discussion members thought it would be better to have time to consider the consultants' report before receiving the WWUG presentation.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted.
2. that the locating of a suitable site for the planting of the oak tree at Burwell Recreation Ground be delegated to the Officers.

L 309 **WITNEY VIKINGS FOOTBALL TEAM**

Members received and considered the report from the Facilities Manager as previously circulated.

In addition to the long term aspiration for an all-weather pitch, the club had suggested a re-planning of the marking out of pitches to enable 8 teams to run from the Burwell Recreation Ground. In order to do this the cricket square would need to be removed and the area re-turfed. The cost would be £1, 490 and would bring the pitch area up to specification. The Vikings would have a permanent home which would in turn free up other pitches around the town for other teams.

A member asked if the cricket square was used and the Works Contracts Supervisor confirmed that it had never been used.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted
2. that the costs to remove the cricket be agreed.

L 310 **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Members received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk as previously circulated.

A member referred to the Summary of Income and Expenditure Report (month ending 31st May 2013) and noted that central overheads and staff recharges had not been carried out. He asked for this to be done on a basis appropriate for the committee meetings. The Town Clerk advised that it had previously been agreed this would be done on a quarterly basis and it would be a major task to do this more frequently giving the calendar of meetings.

The member asked for an extra column to be added to the table of income and expenditure in the report to show the forecast expenditure and income based on the decisions the Council made throughout the year. The Chair suggested these proposals be deferred to the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting.

The Town Clerk asked if members were happy with the manual spread sheet produced by the RFO. Members thought it was a good start but that some amendments could be made. The Chair suggested that these members met with the RFO to discuss this.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

L 311 **HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE**

The Facilities Manager gave a verbal update on the health and safety audit and advised that a fuller report would be presented to the next meeting of Full Council on 5th August. She informed the Committee that there would be a meeting with the Works Contracts Supervisor and the external auditor later that week. Any financial implications arising from that discussion would be taken to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

RECOMMENDATION: that the verbal report be noted.

L 312 **TOWN CENTRE FORUM**

Members received and considered the minutes of the Town Centre Forum held on 30 April 2013 as circulated with the agenda.

The progress of the work on the Market Square was noted, however the Chairman was concerned about the area around the trees which had an awful finish. This should be fed back to the Town Centre Forum. A member agreed to do so. Another member remarked that the trees were dying because they had been incorrectly handled. The Facilities Manager had reported this to the District Council which would refer this back to the County Council who had commissioned the work.

RECOMMENDATION: that the minutes be noted.

L 313 **COMMITTEE VISION AND DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The Committee received and considered the report from the Town Clerk as circulated with the agenda.

In response to a member's enquiry regarding the progress of the Excel Tennis courts proposal, the Town Clerk advised that the financial information requested at the last meeting would be available at the Special meeting scheduled for 29th July 2013.

Another member thought that the allotments should be added to the list of current projects but these were now run by the allotment association with the exception of those at Park Road. A member reported that she thought two of the plots at Park Road were in bad condition and the Democratic

Service Officer advised that she had terminated the tenancy on one plot and was in the process of re-letting the other.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted
2. that the following dates be agreed as monthly Leisure and Recreation Committee meetings:-
 - 29th July 2013
 - 9th September 2013
 - 30th September 2013
 - 4th November 2013
 - 9th December 2013
 - 13th January 2014
 - 3rd February 2014
 - 3rd March 2014

L 314 SPLASH WORKING PARTY MINUTES

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the Splash Party Working party held on 3rd June 2013.

A member commented that it was disappointing no members had attended. The Facilities Manager reported that she had altered the time of the next meeting to the evening to enable members to attend.

RECOMMENDATION: that the minutes be noted.

L 315 CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES

The Committee received and considered the report of the Events and Communications Officer as circulated with the agenda.

The Events and Communications Officer had put together a suggested timetable for the Christmas festivities over the weekend of 29th November to 1st December 2013. She reported that she was in touch with the District Council regarding her attendance at a future Safety Advisory Group meeting in order to progress the suggested entertainment in Market Square.

The Events and Communications Officer highlighted the fact that Witney Lions wanted to put on a Christmas extravaganza, similar to what the Council used to do but on Church Green.

Another member liked the new format proposed but had concerns about the number of people attending. It was confirmed that the new ideas would draw people away from Market Square.

The Events and Communications Officer said that although the various groups were responsible for their own events, she was sure that they would all pull together.

If the lantern parade was to take place, the Events and Communications Officer would need to know the take –up, but it was anticipated costs could be in the region of £4,000. It might be better to do this on the Saturday evening as Carterton had their lantern parade on the Friday evening.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) that the report be noted
- 2) that the Lions Christmas extravaganza could go ahead.

The meeting closed at 7.35pm.

Chairman.